Communicable Disease Control Manual
Chapter 4: Tuberculosis

Appendix C: Collection of Specimens for TB Testing
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APPENDIX C: COLLECTION OF SPECIMENS FOR TB TESTING

To access information about specimen collection, handling and transport instructions, or ordering, submitting and processing information of specimens for Mycobacteriology examination, contact BCCDC Public Health Laboratory (BCCDC PHL) Mycobacteriology/TB laboratory at 604-707-2630 or review the eLab Handbook.

The PHSA Mycobacteriology/TB Requisition forms can be found in the eLab Handbook.

Below are instructions on how to search the eLab Handbook for Mycobacteriology-specific information:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Instruction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Choose your home lab</td>
<td>Select “BCCDC Public Health Laboratory” from drop-down menu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>SEARCH FOR TEST</td>
<td>Type “mycobacterium” and select “Go”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Test Name</td>
<td>Choose appropriate test from records returned</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For consultation or discussion of specific laboratory tests or results, the TB Nurse Consultants can be contacted regarding sputum specimen collection, at 604-707-5678. Questions regarding the collection of all other specimens can be directed to the BCCDC PHL at 604-707-2630.

**REQUIREMENTS FOR COLLECTION**

- **All** specimens must be submitted in sterile, screw-cap leak-proof containers. Ensure that the specimen container is tightly closed. **Leaking specimens will not be processed.** Do not use caps containing cardboard liners (will soak up the specimen).
- Specimen containers must be labeled legibly.
- Submit one specimen container per biohazard bag. Each bag must contain a requisition in the side pocket that includes two patient identifiers (e.g., full name, date of birth) that are identical to the patient information on the specimen container. If possible, provide a brief summary of patient history and findings on the laboratory requisition. This information may be important for the assessment of significance of nontuberculous mycobacteria (NTM) isolates.
- Specimens for mycobacterial culture must not be submitted in alcohol, formalin, or other preservative.
- When specimens are sent for histopathology examination, at least one additional specimen should be collected/submitted appropriately for mycobacterial culture (i.e., not submitted in alcohol, formalin, or other preservative).
- Gastric lavage fluid, lymph node or other tissue biopsy samples, sputum or urine specimens should be refrigerated at 4°C (except blood culture and cerebrospinal fluid specimens) before and during transport to the laboratory.
- Specimens or samples suspected of containing *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* must be transported as Category B, Type P650 packaging. Refer to regulations for [Transport of Dangerous Goods](#).